



News Release

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For Immediate Release

State officials announce 10th human case of EEE in Massachusetts

Personal protection measures continue to be essential

BOSTON (September 20, 2019)—The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that laboratory testing has confirmed the 10th human case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus infection, a man in his 70s from Bristol County. The hospital has reported to DPH that the patient died as a result of his illness. There are no risk level changes associated with this finding.

There are 35 communities now at critical risk, 40 at high risk, and 128 at moderate risk for the EEE virus in Massachusetts. A map of the state's current EEE risk levels can be found [here](#).

“We continue to emphasize the need for people to protect themselves from mosquito bites,” said **Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH**. “The unusually warm weather conditions this weekend will increase activity in both people and mosquitoes. It is absolutely essential to take steps to avoid mosquito bites.”

In addition to the ten human cases of EEE this season in Massachusetts, there have also been eight confirmed cases of EEE this year in animals - seven horses and a goat. Two people have died. There has also been one [human case of West Nile virus](#) (WNV) this season.

State officials continue to remind residents throughout the Commonwealth to take personal precautions to prevent mosquito bites. Residents can learn more about EEE and ways to protect themselves on DPH's [website](#).

EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages. EEE occurs sporadically in Massachusetts with the most recent outbreak years occurring from 2004-2006 and 2010-2012. There were 22 human cases of EEE infection during those two outbreak periods with 14 cases occurring among residents of Bristol and Plymouth counties.

EEE virus has been found in 421 mosquito samples this year, many of them from species of mosquitoes capable of spreading the virus to people. An additional 76 mosquitos have tested positive for WNV.

As previously [announced](#), the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) is conducting aerial spraying for mosquitoes tonight and through the weekend in parts of Bristol and Plymouth counties. As always, aerial spraying is weather and equipment dependent and falling evening temperatures will affect the ability to conduct an effective spraying operation.

Residents are encouraged to visit the DPH website at www.mass.gov/eee for the latest updates on spraying in their communities.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes:

Avoid Mosquito Bites

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient (DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535) according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours

The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning in areas of high risk.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites

Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty unused flowerpots and wading pools and change the water in birdbaths frequently. Install or Repair Screens. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Protect Your Animals

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs should be flushed out at least once a week during the summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Owners should also speak with their veterinarian about mosquito repellents approved for use in animals and vaccinations to prevent WNV and EEE. If an animal is suspected of having WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800. For the most up-to-date information, Q&As, and downloadable fact sheets about EEE in multiple languages visit the DPH webpage www.mass.gov/eee.

For questions about aerial spraying, contact the MDAR Crop and Pest Services at (617) 626-1700.

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